

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES NORTH CAROLINA OUTPERFORMS MORE THAN 40 STATES ON NAEP MATH EXAMS

Despite Percentage of Disadvantaged Students, N.C. Scores Above Expectations on National Exams

RALEIGH — Gov. Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina has scored above predicted results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math exams when the scores are adjusted to reflect the percentage of economically disadvantaged served in the state. Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services conducted a national analysis of the 2003 and 2005 NAEP scores and developed statistical expectations for test results by considering each state's percentage of economically disadvantaged students and the percentage of students who met set (basic or proficient) performance standards.

"These results prove that we have made the right investments in education to help all of our children excel in the classroom," Easley said. "We must continue our progress to make sure every child in every corner of every county in North Carolina receives the education they deserve and the tools they need to succeed."

North Carolina 4th graders performed consistently above Standard and Poor's expectations on the 2003 and 2005 math NAEP tests when taking into account demographic differences among states. In 2005, 4th graders in North Carolina achieved a score of 241, which topped the national average of 237 and represented a gain of 28 points since 1992. Forty percent of the state's 4th graders scored at or above the proficient level, beating the national average of 35 percent. Florida, Kansas, South Carolina, Texas and Minnesota also outperformed expected performance levels on fourth grade math scores.

Standard & Poor's developed the alternative method for examining states' performance on the NAEP tests to "level the playing field" so policy makers and educators can make more equitable comparisons between high-performing states with a fewer percentage of economically disadvantaged children and low-performing states with a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged children. Under this system, each state's performance is considered to be "risk-adjusted," meaning it accounts for the percentage of at-risk, low-income students in each state. Analysts first used this method with 2003 NAEP scores and released its latest findings for the 2005 NAEP scores last month.

The NAEP exams, also known as "the Nation's Report Card," are the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of American students' knowledge and application of reading and math skills. All NAEP results are based on a sample of students.

Standard and Poor's School Evaluation Services was created in 2001 to provide educators, policy makers, business leaders, parents and tax payers with an objective, independent analysis of school and school district data to allow them to implement more effective school reform policies. For more information, visit www.schoolmatters.com.

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